



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua Sharfstein, Secretary

Office of Communications

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

“Know Your HIV Status, Get Educated, Get Tested, Get Treated”

September 18th National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day

Local observation is on September 16th

BALTIMORE, MD (September 14, 2011) – The 4th annual National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day is on Sunday, September 18, 2011. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Administration (IDEHA) will collaborate with Baltimore City Health Department, Baltimore City Senior Centers, Older Women Embracing Life (OWEL), Johns Hopkins AIDS Education and Training Center (AETC) and The National AIDS Institute to observe National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day to promote prevention awareness education and access to HIV counseling, testing and referral (CTR) services on Friday, September 16.

Maryland's total number of living HIV cases as of December 2009 is 29,080. There are 10,579 persons, that is one third, (36.3%), of all people living with HIV in Maryland who are 50 years of age and older. The predominant routes of HIV exposure reported among Marylanders 50 years and older are injection drug use and heterosexual transmission.

"The proportion of heterosexual HIV and injection drug use HIV cases in persons 50 and older is increasing in Maryland," said DHMH Secretary Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, "We can not overlook this population for education, testing and treatment, if needed."

"The theme of this year's National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day is '*Aging is a part of life; HIV doesn't have to be.*' Testing is the only way to identify if you are HIV positive.

"The sooner you know your status, the better your health outcomes," said IDEHA Director, Heather Hauk. "An estimated 21% of people nationwide are living with HIV and do not know their status. We strongly encourage all Marylanders 13 years and older to talk about HIV, get educated, get tested for HIV at least once a year, and seek access to HIV care and treatment."

Residents who are HIV positive are reminded to secure regular care from qualified health care providers and case managers. DHMH's Infectious Disease and Environmental Health Administration administers the Maryland AIDS Drug Assistance Program (MADAP). The program has over 190 medications on the formulary and provides free HIV treatment

medications for persons living with HIV who are not covered by any other type of insurance.

For further information on HIV testing and care services contact IDEHA at 410-767-5252 or visit <http://ideha.dhmf.maryland.gov/CHP>. For data and information about the HIV epidemic in Maryland, please visit the Center for HIV Surveillance and Epidemiology website at: <http://ideha.dhmf.maryland.gov/chse> .

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